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THE Poultry and Egg SITUATION

BUREAU OF AGRICULTURAL ECONOMICS
UNITED STATES DEPARTMENT OF AGRICULTURE

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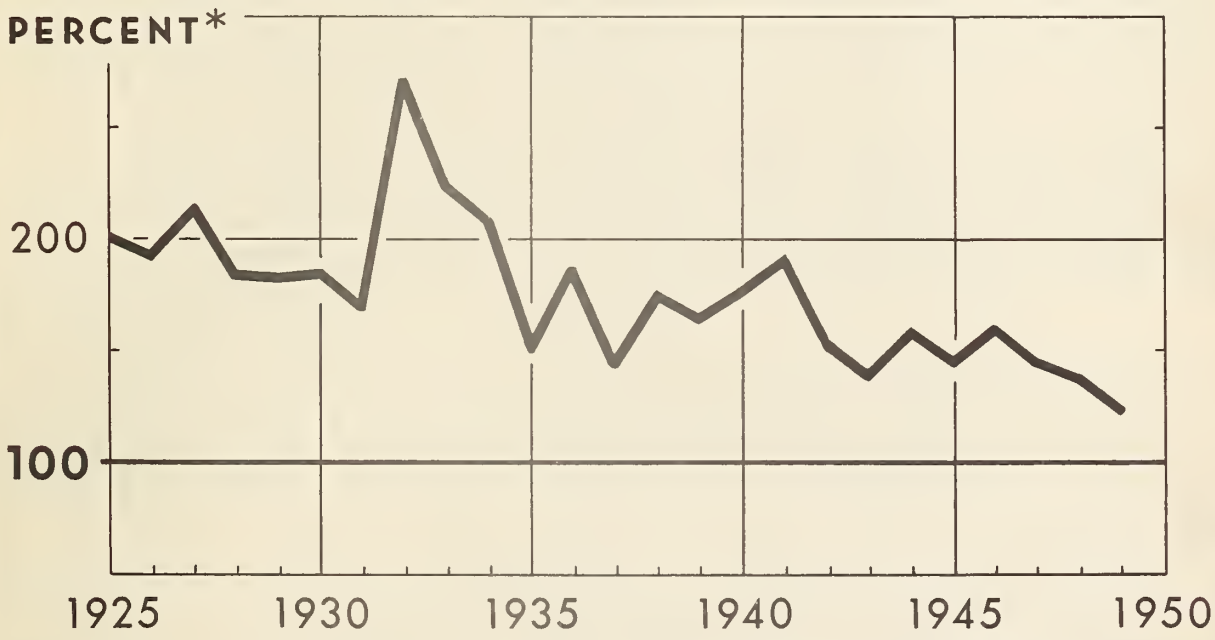
In this issue:
World Egg Production, 1949

SEASONAL VARIATION IN FARM EGG PRICES



*PEAK MONTHLY PRICE AS A PERCENT OF SPRINGTIME (MARCH, APRIL, MAY) AVERAGE

U. S. DEPARTMENT OF AGRICULTURE NEG. 47559-XX BUREAU OF AGRICULTURAL ECONOMICS

Continuing trends toward a relatively larger production of eggs in the fall and winter have increased the supplies available in those seasons. Accordingly, the prices prevailing then have been reduced relative to egg prices in the spring, which remains the season of peak egg supplies and lowest prices.

The poultry and egg situation at a glance

Item	Unit	Month or date	Average 1939-48 1/	1949 2/	1950 3/	Month or date	Average 1939-48	1949	1950	Comments on current situation
Eggs										
Farm production	Mil. doz.	Jan.	310.2	381.7	428.9	Feb.	357.2	402.5	434.8	Within 2 percent of February record if adjusted for number of days in the month.
Average number of layers on farms	Millions	Jan.	386.7	377.3	403.5	Feb.	380.2	370.2	393.7	
Rate of lay per hen	Eggs	Jan.	9.6	12.1	12.8	Feb.	11.2	13.0	13.2	Sixth consecutive monthly record
Apparent civilian per capita disappearance	Eggs	Dec.	26.4	31.5	31.0	Jan.	28.2	34.2	35.1	
Frozen egg production	Mil. lb.	Jan.	---	3.4	29.8	Feb.	---	17.0	46.9	
Dried egg production	Mil. lb.	Jan.	---	2.5	3.2	Feb.	---	6.8	6.0	
Price received by farmers	Ct. per doz.	Jan.	33.3	47.1	31.3	Feb.	29.9	41.8	29.6	Lowest in about 6 years
Price received by farmers as a percentage of parity	Percent	Jan.	92	85	62	Feb.	92	87	66	
Retail price (BAE)	Ct. per doz.	Dec.	51.1	69.2	55.2	Jan.	45.8	67.2	47.7	
Egg-feed price ratio	Lb. feed	Jan.	12.8	13.0	9.3	Feb.	11.6	12.2	8.8	Unfavorable to producers
Stocks:										
Shell	Thous. cases	Feb.1	292	152	380	Mar.1	673	144	743	Increasing rapidly
Frozen	Mil. lb.	Feb.1	2,112	1,908	1,468	Mar.1	2,001	1,563	1,946	
Dried	Mil. lb.	Feb.1	---	25.1	76.3	Mar.1	---	26.3	77.0	
Chicks hatched by commercial hatcheries	Millions	Jan.	47.5	80.2	83.7	Feb.	104.9	139.1	139.8	Later months may show decline from last year
Hens and pullets of laying age	Millions	Feb.1	4/411.3	374.1	399.0	Mar.1	376.6	366.3	388.4	
Farm price of poultry ration	Dol.per cwt.	Jan.	2.67	3.62	3.38	Feb.	2.62	3.44	3.35	
Poultry										
Price received by farmers for chickens	Ct. per lb.	Jan.	20.2	30.7	20.3	Feb.	20.4	29.5	21.8	
Price received by farmers as a percentage of parity	Percent	Jan.	107	108	71	Feb.	107	106	77	
Retail price of chickens (BAE)	Ct. per lb.	Dec.	39.5	59.8	47.8	Feb.	39.6	59.4	42.3	
Price received by farmers for turkeys	Ct. per lb.	Jan.	26.7	49.3	32.6	Feb.	26.0	44.1	31.6	
Stocks:										
Poultry, excluding turkeys	Mil. lb.	Feb.1	153.4	93.6	158.1	Mar.1	133.7	81.0	130.9	Decreasing seasonally
Turkeys	Mil. lb.	Feb.1	73.6	54.8	137.6	Mar.1	67.6	50.5	128.2	
Chicken-feed price ratio	Lb. feed	Jan.	7.9	8.5	6.0	Feb.	8.0	8.6	6.5	Nearer to long-time average than is the egg-feed ratio
Turkey-feed price ratio	Lb. feed	Jan.	10.3	13.6	9.6	Feb.	10.1	9.6	9.4	
Average weekly receipts of poultry at Central Western Primary Markets, per plant	Thous. lb.	Jan.	10.0	8.4	12.6	Feb.	7.2	10.0	9.7	
Average weekly placements of chicks in 7 broiler areas	Millions	Jan.	---	6.6	6.0	Feb.	---	6.6	6.5	

1/ Except when data are for December, when average is 1938-47.
2/ Except when data are for December, when entries are for 1948.
3/ Except when data are for December, when entries are for 1949.
4/ Average 1944-48.

THE POULTRY AND EGG SITUATION

Approved by the Outlook and Situation Board, March 21, 1950

SUMMARY

Egg prices in the coming months of seasonally large egg production are expected to continue substantially lower than a year ago. They will show some seasonal rise in late summer and fall, but will remain lower than last year. In February, prices received by farmers were 29 percent under a year ago. A relationship almost this far below the 1949 prices may persist through much of 1950.

In the first 3 weeks of March, egg prices rose from the low levels of February. The early March gains in egg prices came largely from the active interest in commercial cold-storage of eggs, both shell and frozen. The increases in storage movements over those of last year are much greater, both on a relative and an absolute basis, than the increases for other outlets, such as immediate consumption, price support purchase, and hatching. Monthly egg production on farms set successive monthly records from September 1949 through January 1950. In mid-February, the United States average price received by producers for eggs was 29.6 cents per dozen--the lowest monthly level in almost 6 years.

The price support program for eggs has been extended another month without change. This provides for the continued purchase through April of dried whole egg from processors who have paid producers an average of not less than 25 cents per dozen. On March 21, the Department of Agriculture announced a large sale of dried whole egg, equivalent to more than a third of the CCC inventory, to the United Kingdom.

Chicken prices in February, at 21.8 cents per pound, were higher than in January, but otherwise the lowest since 1942. Current marketings of chickens from farms are probably near their seasonal low, and fresh supplies are being supplemented by withdrawals from cold storage.

At the beginning of March, reports from commercial hatcheries indicated that 1 percent more eggs were in incubators than a year ago. This is despite farmers' stated intentions of buying 12 percent fewer chicks for flock replacements in 1950 than in 1949. However, on March 1, bookings of chicks for April delivery were down by 23 percent from a year ago. March, April, and May are the most important months for the hatching of chicks for farm laying flock replacements. In the last 20 years, April hatchings have exceeded those in any other month.

Egg Prices in Next Few Months to Remain Seasonally Low; Alternative Dispositions of Large Springtime Supply Will Affect Price Level

In early March, egg prices recovered somewhat from the low levels of mid-February, when the U. S. average farm egg price was 29.6 cents per dozen. From March 1 to March 20 there were 2 to 6 cent per dozen increases in quotations for the principal wholesale grades in the important terminal markets, and in reported paying prices in States where reports are issued on a semi-weekly basis. The large current production--each successive month from September 1949 through January 1950 has been a record for the respective month 1/--is moving to civilian consumption, to cold storage for use later in the year, to hatcheries, and to Government purchase under the price-support program.

The normal seasonal pattern of egg production is that the monthly outputs from farms in March and in April are highs for the year. On a 5-year average basis, May production is about 4 percent lower than the March-April average, and June production is 20 percent lower than the average of the two peak months.

The seasonally high demand for eggs (both shell and frozen) for cold storage, and of demand for eggs for hatching, partially offset the seasonally high fresh egg supplies of the spring months. Diversions of eggs to these outlets tend to reduce monthly supplies of eggs put upon the market for consumption, and bring springtime open-market supplies more nearly in line with the 12 month average. In recent years, Government price-support programs have diverted any remaining excess (after storage and hatching) from the open market.

The seasonal patterns of production and disposition--generally described above--are continuing now, but with some important differences among some of the respective factors. For example, farm production in January and February exceeded comparable output a year ago by 1,572 thousand cases (12 percent) and 1,075 thousand cases (8 percent) respectively. Disregarding the relatively small additions made by imports, the subtraction from this supply of (a) the volume of eggs used for hatching, (b) the quantity diverted to cold-storage, and (c) the quantity involved in price support, gives a remainder which approximates the quantity moving through commercial channels for immediate domestic consumption, military use, and export. 2/ On the basis of computations made by this procedure, (table 1) it seems that this commercial offtake of eggs in January 1950 exceeded the offtake of eggs a year earlier by about 680 thousand cases (5 percent), but in February there was a seeming decrease of 144 thousand cases (1 percent) from the year before. These changes average out at a percentage

1/ Egg production in February 1950 fell 5 percent short of the record output for that month, in 1944, a leap year.

2/ Other processes of adjustment by subtraction can also be used to derive a measure of the commercial shell egg supplies available on the open market, but the particular procedure used here depends only upon data which are available within 15 days of the end of each month.

scarcely higher than the 1.8 percent increase which occurred in population. Over the same 12 months, farm egg prices declined nearly a third and retail prices declined almost as much. Since civilian consumption accounts for by far the largest part of this commercial disappearance, the stability of consumption, even in the face of price reductions, indicates that consumers are slow in changing their buying habits to meet price changes.

Since consumption has absorbed relatively little of the production increase, the total to other important outlets--storage, hatching, and price support--must necessarily have increased. At least through mid-March, the significant increase has been in storage. Other outlets had not changed much from a year before. Through March 15, contracts equivalent to 1,438 thousand cases of eggs were made under the 1950 price-support program; through the same date in 1949, the equivalent of 1,530 thousand cases went through that channel. Hatching to date has likewise shown little change from 1949, and the changes in the remaining spring months are expected to be downward, in keeping with farmers' intentions to buy fewer chicks. The January and February net movement to storage, however, is considerably different from last year; in those months of 1949, the equivalent of 1.2 million cases of eggs came out of storage; in the same months of 1950, 1.1 cases of eggs went into storage.

The into-storage movement of eggs-which is discussed in more detail in another section of this report--began very early, and has resulted in a large net accumulation for so early in the season. Peak 1950 holdings of both shell and frozen egg will exceed the 1949 peaks, and perhaps even approach the 1948 levels. Even so, there is still some doubt that storage will continue to absorb all eggs that may become available in excess of current levels of consumption and price support purchases. This assumes that hatching continues according to its normal seasonal pattern, but at a somewhat lower level than last year.

If seasonally high egg production does continue for a longer period than the active demand for storage persists, the difference will have to be taken up by consumption or the price support program, with changes in the latter probably the most significant. This may happen before mid-summer. If the excess becomes substantial, it would divert to the Government price support program a larger proportion of the eggs than it is now handling. Since most producers are now receiving more than 25 cents per dozen through outlets other than the support program, a shift of eggs to Government programs, at the current floor, would tend to reduce the average price received by farmers.

Factors in Late Summer Egg Prices Include Large Laying Flock, High Rate of Lay, Prospective Heavy Storage Supplies

In 1949, the average person in the United States consumed eggs at a rate in excess of an egg a day. The slowness of consumers to increase their consumption from this level, even at lowered prices, may be a factor as important in the fall egg price outlook as in the more immediate outlook.

The seasonal egg price rises of past years have been very largely associated with seasonal declines in the supply of eggs. (See cover page, Poultry and Egg Situation, July, 1949.) Seasonal changes in egg quality

and demand may also be factors in price changes, but their significance can not be shown statistically. (An exception to this generalization might be demand changes during Lent and the Easter season.) Therefore, supply changes seem the principal basis for seasonal changes in the price of eggs.

Table 1.- Eggs: Monthly commercial supply from farm production, and average prices, January 1948 to date 1/

Year and month	Farm production	Net commercial cold storage movements, shell and frozen equivalent		Eggs for hatching	Government purchases for price support	Eggs from farm production and storage for domestic consumption, military use, and export	U. S. average farm price, per dozen	U. S. average retail price, (BAE) per dozen
		Out	In					
	1,000 cases	1,000 cases	1,000 cases	1,000 cases	1,000 cases	1,000 cases	Cents	Cents
1948								
Jan.	11,994	410		408		11,996	48.7	68.8
Feb.	13,075		150	892		12,032	45.0	60.6
Mar.	16,872		1,437	1,190		14,245	42.6	60.1
Apr.	17,444		3,470	882		13,092	42.6	59.3
May	16,581		3,453	386	94	12,648	41.5	59.3
June	13,892		960	232	645	12,055	43.4	62.5
July	12,322		40	197	784	11,301	45.8	64.2
Aug.	10,850	1,570		186	618	11,616	49.2	69.1
Sept.	9,758	2,046		195	329	11,694	51.4	70.7
Oct.	9,706	2,403		241	205	11,663	54.7	76.6
Nov.	9,594	1,880		229	46	11,199	58.3	78.2
Dec.	11,128	1,240		334	76	11,958	52.8	69.2
1949								
Jan.	12,725	611		582	173	12,581	47.1	67.3
Feb.	13,417	287		1,099	481	12,124	41.8	57.1
Mar.	17,064		872	1,260	1,018	13,914	41.2	57.9
Apr.	16,972		1,216	1,075	1,511	13,170	42.3	58.9
May	16,244		1,972	486	834	12,958	43.4	61.
June	13,644		1,169	246	662	11,567	44.1	63.
July	12,022	275		217	652	11,428	45.3	64.
Aug.	10,700	1,003		228	367	11,108	48.8	70.
Sept.	9,992	1,282		267	201	10,806	52.5	72.
Oct.	10,492	983		246	52	11,177	51.4	72.
Nov.	10,769	874		231	96	11,316	47.1	65.
Dec.	12,575	647		349	880	11,993	40.5	55.
1950								
Jan.	14,297		301	582	153	13,261	31.3	47.
Feb.	14,492		831	2/1,110	571	11,980	29.6	

1/ Corresponding data for prior months are given in The Poultry and Egg Situation July-August 1949, table 2, page 5.
2/ Estimated on the basis of eggs in incubators March 1.

Egg supplies are likely to continue large for some months. Numbers of layers probably will remain larger than a year earlier at least past mid-year, current trends point to a continued high rate of lay, and a large accumulation of eggs in storage will supplement fresh supplies after mid-year.

Unless abnormally high culling rates (not yet in evidence) result in an unusually early reduction in the number of layers, the number of birds in farm flocks may continue larger than a year earlier in every month at least until August; it is not until then, or perhaps even a month later, that the maintenance of numbers of layers will depend upon the addition of 1950-hatched pullets to laying flocks. Naturally, in the months afterward, when pullet replacements become an important factor in maintaining the size of flocks, numbers of layers may decline to last year's levels or below, since farmers intend to raise fewer chickens this year than last. But until then, a continuation of numbers larger than in 1949 is expected. The trend so far this year in comparison with past years, is shown in table 2.

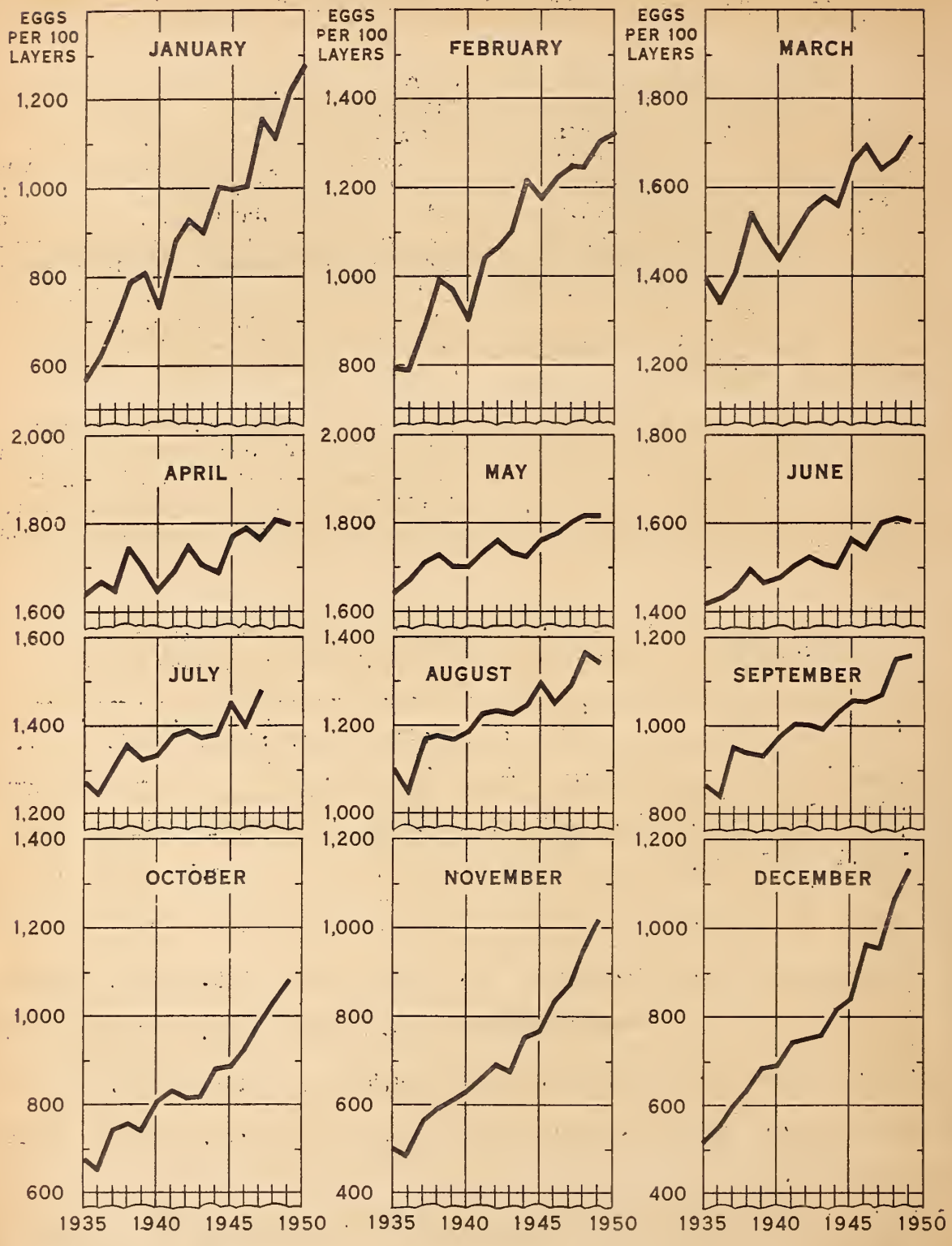
Trends in monthly rate of lay, shown in figure 1, also support the expectation of continued large egg supplies from current production. For each of the months of the year, the trend is upward. Although it has been most sharply upward in the winter months, it is also consistently rising in the late summer and fall months upon which the present discussion is centered.

Table 2.- Layers on farms: Average numbers each month as a percentage of preceding month, United States, 1944 to date

Year	Jan.	Feb.	Mar.	Apr.	May	June	July	Aug.	Sept.	Oct.	Nov.	Dec.
	Percent	Percent	Percent	Percent	Percent	Percent	Percent	Percent	Percent	Percent	Percent	Percent
1944	102.1	99.1	98.3	95.5	93.8	93.1	92.8	95.9	105.2	109.8	107.7	104.1
1945	99.5	98.0	97.0	95.1	94.9	94.6	93.3	95.9	105.4	110.6	109.0	106.0
1946	101.2	98.7	97.2	94.9	93.1	92.7	93.0	96.4	105.9	110.7	108.2	104.9
1947	100.6	98.0	97.1	95.4	95.0	95.2	94.6	96.7	106.4	110.8	107.2	103.7
1948	100.1	97.5	96.3	95.3	94.5	94.5	94.4	97.5	106.8	111.4	107.3	103.2
1949	100.3	98.1	96.6	95.0	94.9	95.0	95.1	98.4	108.4	112.8	108.9	105.2
1950 1/	100.6	97.6										

1/ Preliminary.

RATES OF LAY: EGGS PER 100 LAYERS IN FARM FLOCKS, BY MONTHS 1935 TO DATE



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In recent years, the increases in monthly egg production per layer have been sharpest and most consistent in October, November, December, and January

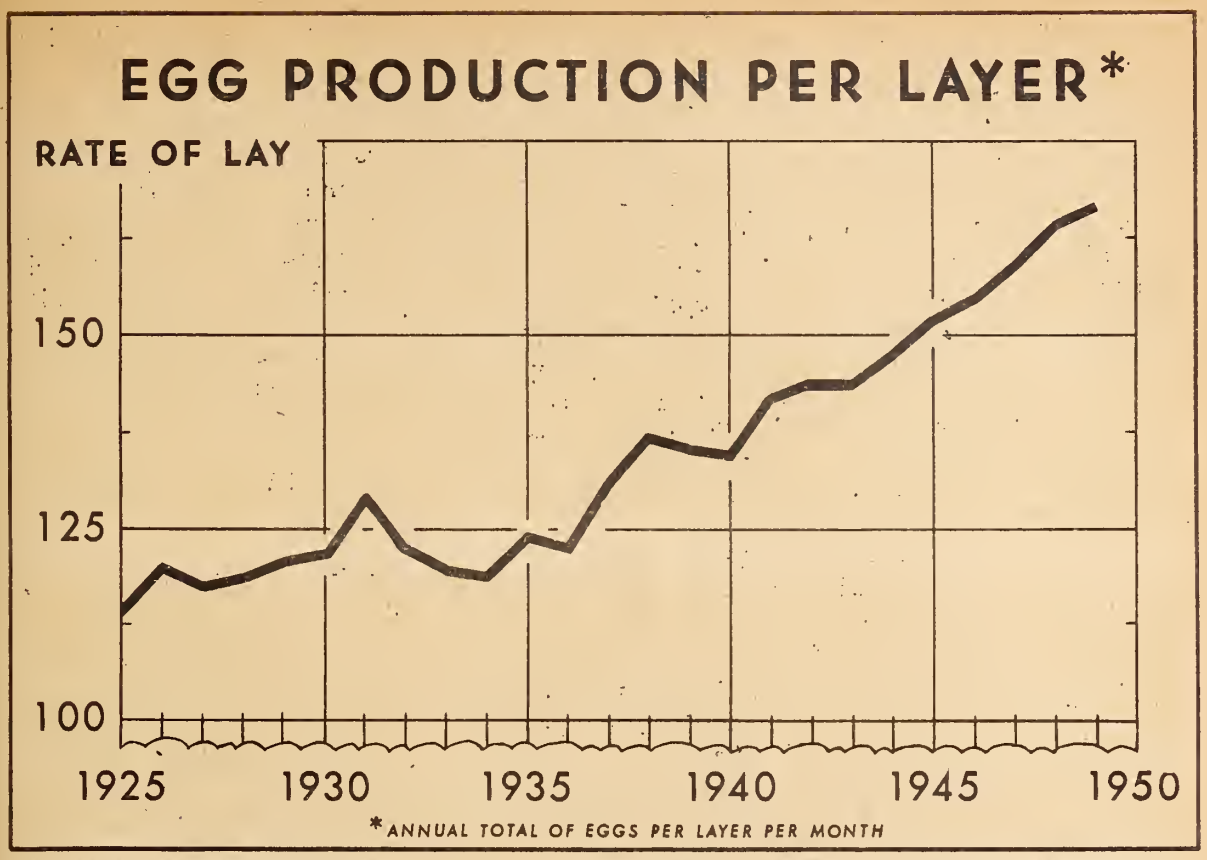

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Table 3.- Rate of lay: Annual total of eggs per layer per month, and monthly number of eggs per 100 layers, 1925 to date

(Data for figures 1 and 2)

Year	Annual total per layer	Monthly number per 100 layers											
		Jan.	Feb.	Mar.	Apr.	May	June	July	Aug.	Sept.	Oct.	Nov.	Dec.
	Eggs	Eggs	Eggs	Eggs	Eggs	Eggs	Eggs	Eggs	Eggs	Eggs	Eggs	Eggs	Eggs
1925	114	412	722	1,348	1,582	1,565	1,319	1,186	1,041	835	591	363	391
1926	120	539	808	1,378	1,605	1,640	1,390	1,253	1,108	875	624	385	383
1927	118	528	821	1,448	1,652	1,625	1,364	1,202	1,034	793	585	403	389
1928	119	540	804	1,344	1,605	1,613	1,379	1,216	1,059	851	641	434	455
1929	121	590	751	1,357	1,668	1,654	1,404	1,268	1,110	868	631	410	407
1930	122	534	870	1,507	1,657	1,636	1,391	1,226	1,050	844	620	438	467
1931	129	649	939	1,472	1,658	1,683	1,422	1,269	1,137	912	686	507	524
1932	123	683	945	1,394	1,597	1,632	1,383	1,234	1,088	871	636	423	405
1933	128	661	879	1,343	1,609	1,628	1,346	1,177	1,036	804	592	417	458
1934	119	646	831	1,330	1,591	1,602	1,338	1,160	993	811	629	466	468
1935	124	566	795	1,396	1,639	1,641	1,414	1,271	1,095	866	672	499	512
1936	123	623	790	1,341	1,666	1,670	1,428	1,242	1,047	838	646	482	551
1937	131	702	882	1,411	1,644	1,709	1,451	1,307	1,171	953	742	560	599
1938	137	790	994	1,540	1,746	1,728	1,493	1,357	1,179	936	756	590	636
1939	136	806	973	1,488	1,701	1,701	1,464	1,323	1,167	933	739	607	682
1940	135	733	904	1,439	1,652	1,701	1,476	1,335	1,186	976	803	626	685
1941	142	880	1,037	1,497	1,691	1,735	1,505	1,378	1,224	1,007	825	660	738
1942	144	927	1,064	1,553	1,748	1,760	1,524	1,387	1,233	1,003	815	689	747
1943	144	900	1,100	1,578	1,707	1,736	1,506	1,372	1,224	996	816	678	754
1944	148	1,004	1,218	1,563	1,688	1,723	1,502	1,380	1,243	1,032	879	750	818
1945	152	999	1,174	1,659	1,770	1,762	1,564	1,451	1,297	1,060	883	766	838
1946	155	1,028	1,219	1,694	1,788	1,775	1,546	1,400	1,249	1,058	925	835	961
1947	159	1,157	1,245	1,642	1,764	1,803	1,603	1,478	1,289	1,068	984	873	957
1948	164	1,112	1,243	1,665	1,806	1,817	1,612	1,515	1,368	1,152	1,029	948	1,065
1949	167	1,214	1,305	1,718	1,798	1,816	1,605	1,488	1,346	1,159	1,079	1,017	1,129
1950		1,275	1,325										

The third basis for expecting a large supply of eggs in the late summer and fall lies in the prospective volume of cold storage holdings, and in the possible pattern for its disposition. The impression left by last year's price trends, particularly for shell eggs, may again induce storers to dispose of considerable quantities early in the season. Last year's peak monthly withdrawal of shell eggs from storage was 608 thousand cases, in September. The August figure was 510 thousand cases. One possibility is that these respective monthly figures may be exceeded in 1950 by a percentage equivalent to the percentage by which peak storage holdings will exceed 1949. Another possibility, depending upon the belief that egg supplies in later months may be lower relative to last year, is that storers may hold eggs later for the relatively firmer prices that they may expect. The first expectation is enhanced by reports common in the egg trade that present storage stocks are very extensively hedged on the Chicago Mercantile Exchange, where the preponderant volume of egg futures commitments is now (mid-March) in the September contract.

On the basis of this analysis, the prospective supply of eggs for July and August will not be greatly different from the level prevailing early this year for the monthly offtake for civilian consumption, military use, and commercial export. Of course the proportion of those total July and August supplies which will be available to comprise the commercial offtake may be diminished by price-support purchase. The scope of the Government's intended price-support activity beyond the end of April has not yet been announced, so Government actions to affect the summer and fall markets cannot yet be anticipated.

Into-Storage Movement of Eggs Continues;
Accumulation Reported Extensively Hedged

Through mid-March, the rate of storage of both shell and frozen eggs continued at rates well in advance of last year. In January and February this year the accumulation of shell and frozen eggs combined was the equivalent of 1.1 million cases, while in the same months of 1949 there was a net movement out of storage, with stocks then being reduced by 1.2 million cases. Data from 35 principal cities indicate that the movement since then has been at almost the same relative rate.

U. S. shell egg stocks on March 1 were 0.7 million cases, 5 times as large as on the same date a year ago, and a third larger than the 5-year (1945-49) average. The 35-city stocks, which are reported weekly, were 0.8 million cases on March 18, more than 3 times more than on the corresponding date a year ago. During February, the net in-movement in the U. S. totaled 363 thousand cases, while the 35-city accumulations in the second and third weeks of March were respectively 91 and 84 thousand cases.

Compared with previous years, an unusually large proportion of the shell egg holdings are held in Illinois and, more specifically, in Chicago. (See table 4.) This is attributed to the reported extensive interest in hedging shell egg holdings through egg futures sales on the Chicago Mercantile Exchange, which permits out-of-Chicago deliveries only at a penalty. The number of outstanding contracts for fall delivery

on that Exchange is much greater this year than at the same time last year. On March 21, 1950 there were 1,930 contracts outstanding for fall delivery (1097 September, 833 October). A year ago the total for October, the earliest fall month then traded, was 1,182 contracts. Each contract is for 480 cases.

Table 4.- Shell eggs: Cold-storage holdings, United States, Illinois, 35 principal cities, and Chicago, specified dates, 1949 and 1950

Date 1/	1949						1950					
	United States	Illinois	Illinois as a percentage of U. S.	35 cities (Saturday)	Chicago (following Monday)	Chicago as a percentage of 35 cities	United States	Illinois	Illinois as a percentage of U. S.	35 cities (Saturday)	Chicago (following Monday)	Chicago as a percentage of 35 cities
	Thous. cases	Thous. cases	Percent	Thous. cases	Thous. cases	Percent	Thous. cases	Thous. cases	Percent	Thous. cases	Thous. cases	Percent
Feb. 1:	152	57	38				379	118	31	336	164	49
4:				104	56	54				447	249	56
11:				120	52	43				529	306	58
18:				112	45	40				574	339	59
25:				98	32	33						
Mar. 1:	144	31	22				743	348	47			
4:				88	22	25				621	365	59
11:				122	25	20				712	400	56
18:				183	29	16				796	432	54
25:				246	40	16						
Apr. 1:	530	50	9	329	50	15						
8:				394	60	15						
15:				437	78	18						
23:				520	101	19						
30:				589	113	19						

1/ The dates of February 1, March 1, and April 1 on a U. S. and State basis are equally applicable to 1949 and 1950. The dates on which entries are made for the cities are applicable to 1950; the city entries for 1949 are for the nearest corresponding weeks in that year.

Table 5.- Frozen eggs: Total cold-storage holdings in selected regions, March 1, 1943-47 average, and 1948 to date.

Region	Holdings				Holdings as a percentage of U. S. total			
	1943-47 average	1948	1949 1/	1950 1/	1943-47 average	1948	1949 1/	1950 1/
	1,000 pounds	1,000 pounds	1,000 pounds	1,000 pounds	Percent	Percent	Percent	Percent
North Atl.	20,258	32,343	15,487	14,238	23	27	26	19
E. N. C.	20,789	32,781	19,044	18,015	25	27	33	25
W. N. C.	26,541	42,116	12,613	25,276	30	35	21	35
Pacific	6,723	2,901	2,952	2,995	8	2	5	4
All Other	12,103	10,524	8,685	12,412	14	9	15	17
Total U.S.	86,414	120,665	58,781	72,986	100	100	100	100

1/ Preliminary.

Table 6.- Shell eggs: Total cold storage holdings in selected regions, March 1, 1943-47 average, and 1948 to date

Region	Holdings				Holdings as a percentage of U. S. total			
	1943-47 average	1948	1949 1/	1950 1/	1943-47 average	1948	1949 1/	1950 1/
	1,000 cases	1,000 cases	1,000 cases	1,000 cases	Percent	Percent	Percent	Percent
North Atl.	338	85	51	184	32	23	34	25
E. N. Cent.	196	91	42	396	19	24	29	53
W. N. Cent.	135	48	9	37	12	13	6	5
Pacific	234	100	18	45	23	27	12	6
All other	153	50	28	81	14	13	19	11
Total U. S.	1,056	374	148	743	100	100	100	100

1/ Preliminary.

Egg futures prices in mid-March were considerably higher than the low levels recorded earlier in the year. At the close on March 21 Septembers were 39.05 cents per dozen, and Octobers 39.10 cents. These prices were respectively 1.10 and 1.30 cents above the lowest close recorded to that date for those contracts. Septembers nevertheless were far below the 42.50 cent price at which they had opened in November 1949.

At their mid-March levels, these futures contracts provided a somewhat less favorable opportunity to hedge storage than they had provided a month earlier, because spot markets had meanwhile risen by a greater amount than futures. Nevertheless, the opportunity for a nominal hedge still existed, and storers are reported to be choosing storage locations and otherwise planning their operations to take direct advantage of it.

While the accumulation of frozen egg is also proceeding at a rapid rate, the location of the present holdings of that product seems little different from a year ago. The locations of frozen holdings by important regions on March 1, 1950 with comparisons, are shown in table 5.

Total holdings of frozen eggs on March 1 were 73 million pounds. The February net in-movement was 18 million pounds, bringing the March 1 stocks to a level 24 million pounds above that of a year ago.

Reports from 35 cities indicate that the heavy in-movement of frozen eggs is continuing, since accumulation of 5.5 and 5.9 million pounds respectively in the second and third weeks of March have brought holdings in the cities to a near-record level for the season. On March 18 there were 57 million pounds stored in the 35 cities, 36 percent more than a year ago, and larger than any other mid-March holding except during 4 war-time and post-war years.

Even a modest extension of the present rates of storage activity will assure an accumulation of stocks this year substantially greater than the 2.3 million cases of shell and 166 million pounds of frozen that were the 1949 peaks of commercial holdings for the U. S. The storage peaks of recent years, and the monthly and weekly holdings during the into-storage seasons, are shown in tables 7 and 8.

Table 7. - Eggs, shell and frozen: U. S. commercial cold-storage stocks, first of each month during the into-storage seasons, 1944 to date

a. Shell

Month	1944 1/2/	1945	1946	1947	1948	1949	1950
	Thous. cases	Thous. cases	Thous. cases	Thous. cases	Thous. cases	Thous. cases	Thous. cases
January	3/593	160	3/62	722	3/192	157	3/108
February	693	3/107	156	258	264	149	377
March	1,926	137	1,486	3/181	364	3/139	743
April	4,259	1,080	3,592	427	1,154	513	
May	6,670	2,867	6,236	1,601	3,072	915	
June	N.A.	4,090	8,459	3,277	4,861	1,861	
July	N.A.	4/4,693	4/9,726	4,063	4/5,612	4/2,258	
August	7,885	4,597	9,360	4/4,133	5,520	1,896	

b. Frozen

	Mil. lb.	Mil. lb.	Mil. lb.	Mil. lb.	Mil. lb.	Mil. lb.	Mil. lb.
January	102	95	68	102	79	79	3/54
February	3/ 82	59	3/46	80	64	56	55
March	99	3/56	64	3/71	3/63	3/46	73
April	149	89	117	85	88	65	
May	218	152	180	133	146	95	
June	292	213	238	174	208	134	
July	354	4/239	4/259	4/190	4/226	163	
August	4/389	234	254	187	221	4/166	

c. Frozen

	Thous. cases	Thous. cases	Thous. cases	Thous. cases	Thous. cases	Thous. cases	Thous. cases
January	2,727	2,521	1,806	2,712	2,116	2,110	3/1,426
February	3/2,179	1,581	3/1,217	2,139	1,644	1,507	1,465
March	2,629	3/1,483	1,720	3/1,896	3/1,684	3/1,230	1,946
April	3,962	2,372	3,115	2,231	2,407	1,728	
May	5,814	3,354	4,799	3,559	3,881	2,542	
June	7,799	5,689	6,353	4,594	5,544	3,568	
July	9,446	4/6,363	4/6,906	4/5,070	4/6,026	4,340	
August	4/10,361	6,229	6.771	4,984	5,886	4/4,427	

1/ Data describing total stocks of shell eggs are available for June and July 1944. Including Government stocks, these are respectively, 9,632 and 11,335 thousand cases.
2/ Total holdings including Government and commercial of frozen egg; holdings of commercial only not available for 1944.
3/ Season low of holdings.
4/ Season peak of holdings.

Table 8 .- Eggs, shell and frozen: Total cold-storage stocks in 35 principal cities, end of each week during the into-storage seasons, 1944 to date

Week ending 1/	Stocks of shell eggs							Stocks of frozen eggs												
								In pounds							In case equivalent					
	1944	1945	1946	1947	1948	1949	1950	1944	1945	1946	1947	1948	1949	1950	1944	1945	1946	1947	1948	1949	1950
	Thous. cases	Thous. cases	Thous. cases	Thous. cases	Thous. cases	Thous. cases	Thous. cases	Mil. lb.	Mil. lb.	Mil. lb.	Mil. lb.	Mil. lb.	Mil. lb.	Mil. lb.	Thous. cases	Thous. cases	Thous. cases	Thous. cases	Thous. cases	Thous. cases	Thous. cases
January 7	2/479	209	2/104	510	134	116	2/56	62	106	83	69	102	75	30	1,666	2,822	2,210	1,844	2,721	2,002	799
14	477	171	118	397	2/120	104	80	57	94	79	66	99	69	2/29	1,514	2,511	2,106	1,764	2,642	1,828	2/786
21	503	2/142	125	287	127	101	119	54	84	75	63	94	64	31	1,427	2,240	2,004	1,683	2,502	1,698	823
28	563	171	113	239	147	100	226	2/52	75	73	60	92	58	32	2/1,377	1,994	1,937	1,608	2,443	1,537	857
February 4	680	217	230	213	194	93	336	52	66	71	57	90	50	34	1,392	1,773	1,904	1,508	2,392	1,339	917
11	842	289	460	2/173	233	104	447	52	60	2/71	53	89	46	37	1,396	1,593	2/1,894	1,423	2,385	1,231	976
18	1,039	374	722	180	258	120	529	54	57	73	50	89	44	40	1,435	1,519	1,947	1,345	2,361	1,167	1,060
25	1,238	374	906	174	266	112	574	58	55	74	2/50	90	41	43	1,555	1,459	1,991	2/1,323	2,404	1,104	1,146
March 4	1,502	415	1,161	178	258	98	621	65	2/54	77	50	2/87	40	46	1,728	2/1,444	2,055	1,328	2/2,323	1,068	1,227
11	1,771	497	1,506	196	293	2/88	712	71	56	80	52	88	2/39	52	1,903	1,480	2,126	1,373	2,338	2/1,031	1,374
18	2,097	665	1,826	239	373	112	796	78	58	84	56	89	40	57	2,086	1,555	2,238	1,495	2,366	1,058	1,532
25	2,425	887	2,208	321	465	183		86	64	89	60	91	42		2,281	1,699	2,365	1,610	2,431	1,112	
April 1	2,796	1,135	2,650	420	590	246		94	70	97	67	96	45		2,494	1,871	2,579	1,778	2,563	1,188	
8	3,086	1,401	3,179	572	819	329		102	76	104	70	102	48		2,727	2,017	2,774	1,870	2,708	1,288	
15	3,375	1,772	3,667	752	1,035	394		112	83	113	77	108	51		2,988	2,222	3,013	2,060	2,885	1,367	
22	3,767	2,060	4,086	951	1,315	437		122	92	123	85	114	55		3,247	2,447	3,283	2,275	3,049	1,478	
29	4,201	2,489	4,454	1,235	1,630	520		134	101	132	94	122	68		3,560	2,706	3,516	2,516	3,243	1,820	
May 6	4,500	2,758	4,870	1,536	2,017	589		144	113	140	103	128	63		3,847	3,009	3,734	2,758	3,404	1,670	
13	4,827	2,990	5,271	1,873	2,417	708		155	120	146	111	137	68		4,143	3,189	3,903	2,958	3,649	1,780	
20	5,174	3,224	5,606	2,120	2,767	883		166	129	152	117	145	70		4,433	3,444	4,056	3,115	3,873	1,869	
27	5,399	3,481	5,919	2,379	3,104	1,063		176	137	159	123	154	75		4,695	3,653	4,252	3,291	4,113	2,013	
June 3	5,597	3,663	6,198	2,604	3,337	1,236		186	144	165	129	161	81		4,966	3,832	4,394	3,452	4,303	2,169	
10	5,726	3,806	6,481	2,766	3,577	1,342		197	149	171	136	167	87		5,261	3,971	4,548	3,634	4,464	2,329	
17	5,783	3,943	6,688	2,915	3,764	1,424		206	152	178	140	172	93		5,483	4,066	4,744	3,745	4,598	2,489	
24	5,827	4,090	6,809	2,964	3,912	1,506		218	155	181	143	176	97		5,811	4,133	4,830	3,810	4,693	2,598	
July 1	3/5,842	4,259	6,875	2,976	4,006	1,580		226	159	182	156	3/177	101		6,034	4,242	4,862	4,151	3/4,728	2,703	
8	5,782	4,290	3/6,894	3,005	4,081	3/1,622		232	3/160	184	160	177	104		6,188	3/4,265	4,917	4,257	4,726	2,762	
15	5,699	3/4,309	6,845	3,021	3/4,121	1,601		240	158	3/185	164	177	104		6,394	4,224	3/4,938	4,363	4,720	2,769	
22	5,620	4,280	6,793	3/3,024	4,092	1,528		246	158	185	163	177	3/105		6,561	4,216	4,922	4,335	4,727	3/2,798	
29	5,444	4,169	6,735	3,013	4,066	1,430		249	155	184	164	176	103		6,650	4,141	4,917	4,367	4,682	2,751	
August 5	5,303	4,054	6,635	2,953	4,016	1,363		3/252	152	182	163	174	100		3/6,714	4,057	4,858	4,347	4,631	2,665	
12	5,172	3,909	6,472	2,929	3,910	1,289		250	148	179	163	171	98		6,678	3,958	4,768	4,359	4,564	2,604	
19	5,105	3,796	6,228	2,857	3,774	1,223		250	145	175	3/164	168	95		6,679	3,873	4,667	3/4,383	4,467	2,534	

1/ Dates given are for 1950; entries for the other years are for the corresponding weeks.
2/ Season low of holdings.
3/ Season peak of holdings.

Government Extends Dried Egg Purchases;
Program Now Open Through April; Large Sale Made

On March 15 the Commodity Credit Corporation extended its dried egg purchase program for another month. This assures its level through April. The certified price of 25 cents per dozen, which is the lowest average price that may be paid by processors to producers, is continued unchanged. Since the beginning of the 1950 program, the paying price for egg powder bought under this program has been 96 cents per pound.

A substantial sale of dried egg from CCC price-support stocks was announced by the Department of Agriculture on March 21. Negotiations were completed for the transfer of 31.8 million pounds of dried whole egg to the United Kingdom. The eggs will be of 1949 production. Present arrangements call for shipment to be made in the bulk packages in which the commodity is currently stored, although it is possible that later arrangements will be made for repackaging into the 5-ounce containers which have been a part of previous British shipments.

The financial arrangements under which the eggs were transferred involve a total of $7 million. Of this sum, $3 million were allocated from ECA funds, $3 million more were provided under a special provision of the Economic Cooperation Act of 1948 1/, and $1 million was from British sources. This is a return of about 22 cents per pound to the CCC for the 31.8 million pounds of dried egg involved in the transfer, which is being made on the basis of delivery at U. S. ports.

In recent weeks, prevailing egg prices in many important Mid-western producing areas have risen above the Government's 25-cent per dozen floor, and the volume processed by dryers has been relatively small. The bulk of current farm egg production has gone into channels leading to commercial dispositions, including freezing and storage in the shell, as well as immediate consumption. Even with the benefit of these outlets, however, the U. S. average farm price in the two months already reported has averaged 31.4 cents per dozen (seasonally-adjusted) compared with the support goal of 37 cents for the year as a whole.

Seasonally adjusted, 2/ the January egg price was 30.4 cents per dozen, and the February figure was 32.5 cents. Without the adjustment for seasonal variation, the respective prices were 31.3 and 29.6 cents.

1/ This provision permits the use of Section 32 funds (funds available to the Secretary of Agriculture for the creation of additional outlets for surplus agricultural products) to match ECA allocations, where such price concessions are necessary.

2/ By the seasonal adjustment factors, used in computing monthly egg prices as a percent of parity. For the months of 1950 for which they have been announced so far these factors are:

Jan. 103; Feb. 91, Mar. 88, April 85, May 86, June 89.

To seasonally adjust a given monthly egg price to an equivalent annual price, divide by the appropriate factor and multiply by 100.

Unless the support program is changed, the prices for the next three or four months are likely to fall in or near the range established by the unadjusted January and February prices. Such a development of egg prices, possibly resulting in a farm price of about 31 or 32 cents per dozen as the cumulative average at the end of June or July, would necessitate an offsetting rise to well above 37 cents in the last half of the year to achieve that year's price-support goal.

Table 9 compares the weekly rates of dried egg purchase to date under the 1950 support program with the weekly purchases in 1949. In 1948, purchases were not begun until mid-May.

Poultry Prices Strengthen; Supplies Begin Moving from Cold Storage

On the basis of price changes in metropolitan markets, chicken prices are indicated to have made further gains since mid-February, when they were 21.8 cents per pound on a U. S. average basis. The gain from mid-January to mid-February was 1.5 cents per pound. Nevertheless, the 1950 prices so far are lower than any annual average since 1942.

Table 9.- Dried egg: Weekly purchases for price support in 1950, beginning of program to date, with comparisons to 1949

Week ended 1/	Purchases under respective annual programs			
	1950		1949	
	Weekly	Cumulative 2/	Weekly	Cumulative 2/
	Thousand pounds	Thousnad pounds	Thousand pounds	Thousand pounds
Jan. 7			252	252
14	557	557	600	852
21	1,475	2,032	469	1,321
28	1,080	3,112	1,857	3,178
Feb. 4	2,004	5,116	828	4,006
11	1,187	6,303	1,084	5,090
18	1,863	8,166	2,107	7,197
25	1,124	9,290	2,304	9,501
Mar. 4	1,901	11,191	2,305	11,806
11	1,842	13,033	3,870	15,676
18	1,346	14,378	4,074	19,750
25			4,647	24,397
Apr. 1			3,835	28,232
8			2,910	31,142
15			1,949	33,091
22			2,747	35,838
29			1,418	37,256
May 6			737	37,993
13			1,314	39,307

1/ Given dates are for 1950; entries for 1949 are for corresponding weeks.
2/ Computed from unrounded data.

"Commercial desiccation of foods is no new thing ... King Charles VI of France. in 1383 ... /prepared/ great quantities of foods, including 'yolks of eggs in powder and rammed into barrels'."

Jensen, Meat and Meat Foods

Farm marketings of chicken are now probably near their seasonal low point. Current broiler marketings are large, however, in keeping with the large numbers of chicks placed in specialized producing areas 3 months ago. Supplies are now being drawn from commercial cold storage stocks, which at their peak (for all poultry combined) were 11 percent larger than last year. During February, stocks were reduced by 37 million pounds (including turkeys and ducks), bringing March 1 holdings to 259 million pounds. The February reduction is 216 percent of the corresponding change last year.

There have been few recent changes in turkey prices. Prices continue near a point equivalent to the Government price payable in July. Turkey stocks in cold storage on March 1 were 128 million pounds, compared with a 5-year average of 89 million pounds. Current consumption of birds from storage is being supplemented by marketings of breeder hens in California and Texas.

Table 10.- Dried egg: Monthly production, monthly deliveries to CCC and number of drying plants holding active contracts 1/, July 1948 to date

Year and month	Dried egg production	Deliveries of dried egg to CCC	Number of drying plants holding active contracts with CCC 1/
	1,000 pounds	1,000 pounds	Number
1948			
July	9,321	7,843	35
August	5,926	6,179	40
September	3,873	3,294	23
October	2,385	2,051	20
November	927	461	9
December	554	761	10
1949			
January	2,460	1,277	10
February	6,846	4,805	25
March	12,942	10,175	35
April	13,285	15,110	2/ 55
May	7,875	8,335	47
June	7,640	6,622	31
July	6,118	6,523	N.A.
August	3,963	3,673	30
September	1,778	2,008	19
October	933	522	8
November	1,207	962	15
December	8,579	8,797	26
1950			
January	3,239	1,527	8
February	5,973	3/ 5,513	20
March		3/ 7,339	29

1/ As of the first Wednesday of each month, contracts for sale of dried egg to CCC. 2/ Estimated. 3/ Subject to revision.

Table 11.- Turkey: Net Government purchases of 1949 crop under price support program, by weeks, 1949 1/

Week ending	Purchases (dressed weight)	Cumulative purchases dressed weight
	1,000 pounds	1,000 pounds
Sept. 10 2/	20.4	20.4
17	---	20.4
24	154.1	174.5
Oct. 1	---	174.5
8	34.4	208.9
15	152.9	361.8
22	66.7	428.5
29	140.3	568.8
Nov. 5	35.3	604.1
12	37.7	641.8
19	36.9	678.7
26	22.4	701.1
Dec. 3	23.6	724.7
10	35.1	759.8
17	---	759.8
24	---	759.8
31 3/	8,114.9	8,874.7

1/ Purchases under this program may be resumed in July, 1950. 2/ First purchase. 3/ Purchases made in this week are subject to downward adjustment depending upon whether or not tendered lots of turkey qualify for delivery under the grade specifications.

Hatchings of Chicks Increase Seasonally; Volume Expected to be Smaller than Last Year

March, April, and May are the months in which most of the chicks for laying flock replacement are hatched. Hatching data do not separate chicks intended for laying flock replacement from chicks intended for specialized broiler output. Nevertheless, as much as three-quarters of the annual output of chicks for laying flock replacements probably are hatched in the 3 spring months.

As of mid-March, reports of eggs in incubators on March 1, and of the volume of hatchery bookings for later delivery, offered the most concrete evidences of whether or not farmers will follow their February intentions of buying 12 percent fewer chicks than last year for laying flock replacements.

On March 1, 1 percent more eggs were in incubators than a year earlier. The increases from a year ago were greatest in the Mountain and South Atlantic regions, while New England had fewer eggs in incubators. This only partly conforms to the intentions statements, which indicated that the largest prospective declines were contemplated in the West South Central, Mountain, and Pacific regions.

Advance bookings on the same date, for the sale of chicks in April, were down from last year in all regions except the Mountain region. The U. S. average decline of 23 percent was exceeded in the following regions: East North Central (29 percent), South Atlantic (39 percent), and West South Central (35 percent). In the important West North Central region, the decrease in March 1 bookings for April delivery was 20 percent.

In the months of January and February 1950, hatchery operations were actually greater than in the same months of 1949, resulting in an output for the 2 months 2 percent higher than last year. But the bulk of the chick output in those months probably was for broiler placements. The number of non-broiler chicks affected by the percentage increase is a very small part of the prospective total.

Table 12.- Chicks hatched by commercial hatcheries, January-July by months, and annual total, 1948 to date

Month	1948	1949	1950
	Thousands	Thousands	Thousands
January	52,575	80,238	83,664
February	97,837	139,689	139,751
March	214,430	263,667	
April	285,690	302,330	
May	211,708	257,894	
June	92,672	116,700	
July	55,577	59,099	
7-month total	1,010,489	1,219,617	
Annual total	1,261,890	1,504,940	

Table 13.- Turkeys: Numbers raised, poult mortality, and related factors, available data, 1929 to date

Year	Intentions to raise turkeys as percentage of previous year	Turkeys raised: Number	Turkeys raised: Percentage of previous year	Poult mortality	Presumed number of poults brooded: Number	Presumed number of poults brooded: Percentage of previous year	Number of turkeys on farms Jan. 1: Breeder hens	Number of turkeys on farms Jan. 1: Total	Number of turkeys on farms Jan. 1: Breeder hens as a percentage of total	No. of poults brooded per breeder on hand Jan. 1
	Percent	1,000	Percent	Percent	1,000	Percent	1,000	1,000	Percent	Number
1929		18,476						5,541		
1930		17,419	94					5,969		
1931		18,249	105					5,318		
1932		22,333	122					5,946		
1933		23,241	104					6,852		
1934		21,702	93					6,309		
1935		20,821	96					5,499		
1936		27,981	134					5,731		
1937		25,755	92				3,481	6,358	54.7	
1938	106	26,887	104	26.3	36,482		3,222	6,096	52.9	11.3
1939	127	33,587	125	26.0	45,388	124	3,914	6,489	60.3	11.6
1940	105	34,047	101	25.9	45,947	101	4,607	8,569	53.8	10.0
1941	97	32,902	97	27.8	45,571	99	3,864	7,193	53.7	11.8
1942	108	32,805	100	28.8	46,074	101	4,003	7,485	53.5	11.5
1943	112	32,309	98	29.7	45,959	100	3,984	6,600	60.4	11.5
1944	102	35,616	110	25.9	48,065	105	4,294	7,429	57.8	11.2
1945	108	44,221	124	22.5	57,059	119	4,606	7,203	63.9	12.4
1946	95	40,724	92	21.7	52,077	91	5,241	8,493	61.7	9.9
1947	84	34,970	86	20.2	43,822	84	4,222	6,650	63.5	10.4
1948	82	31,788	91	13.6	36,797	84	2,771	4,450	62.3	13.3
1949	125	41,965	132	16.4	50,197	136	3,711	5,540	67.0	13.5
1950	101						1/4,062	1/6,120	66.4	

1/ Preliminary.

WORLD EGG PRODUCTION IN 1949; CURRENT CHICKEN NUMBERS

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Egg production during 1949 increased about 4 percent over the previous year in the major producing countries of the world. Continued favorable egg prices throughout most of 1949, and more abundant feed supplies at declining prices in almost every country, have encouraged poultrymen to keep more birds and increase the rate-of-lay in their flocks. World egg production, now about one-fifth above prewar, has recovered to the extent that most rationing has been discontinued. Some governments find it necessary to encourage output of quality products and provide assurance of favorable prices to producers who are experiencing keener competition in domestic and export markets. Large feed-importing countries continue to control production and promote small farm flocks to bring about utilization of home-grown grains and farm wastes.

Chicken numbers increased substantially in response to high prices during the 1949 hatching season. The continued efforts of poultrymen and their respective governments to improve the quality of laying stock will be even more important in the immediate future as margins between costs and sales prices are narrowing. The presence of Newcastle disease has become more widely recognized and immediate attention is being given to this hazard to poultry flocks in a number of countries.

The largest increases in both chicken numbers and egg production were in European countries, a few of which have fully recovered from wartime deficits. Egg production in France, Sweden, Switzerland and Spain was above prewar and in the United Kingdom, Ireland, Denmark and several other Western European countries approached 1934-38 levels. Countries which have encouraged the keeping of small farm flocks generally have made the greatest gains in chicken numbers, but their yields, though improving, have not made a comparable recovery since these have been the less well managed flocks. The Balkan countries, which have just begun significant recovery, have reported less pronounced restoration and are still concerned with obtaining sufficient egg supplies for their domestic markets. Practically every country exporting eggs prior to the last war is again active and of paramount importance are Denmark, the Netherlands, Hungary, Belgium, Poland and Sweden. None of the European countries, however, has attained prewar export levels.

Canada reported a significant decline in the number of eggs produced during 1949. The smaller hatch of 1948 limited the number of layers during 1949 although high prices during most of the year promoted a record rate-of-lay. However, the United Kingdom's contract was not renewed for 1950 and prices dropped drastically during the last months of 1949. The recent announcement of a price support program by the Canadian Government has steadied the market, but at a level somewhat lower than during the term of the United Kingdom contract. The Canadian egg output is expected to decline further in 1950 and production of poultry meat will probably continue more important.

Table 14.- Eggs: Number produced 1/ in specified countries, average 1934-38, annual 1946-49

Continent and country	Average 1934-38	1946	1947	1948	1949
	Million	Million	Million	Million	Million
NORTH AMERICA					
Canada	2,638	3,883	4,484	4,274	3,626
Panama	---	---	52	---	---
United States	35,498	55,590	55,252	55,158	56,382
Cuba	320	300	288	276	318
Dominican Republic	---	60	60	---	---
EUROPE					
Albania	143	---	---	---	---
Austria	663	270	285	350	400
Belgium	1,693	1,100	1,380	1,440	1,530
Bulgaria	682	---	---	---	---
Czechoslovakia 2/	1,958	776	903	1,110	1,380
Denmark	1,979	883	992	1,392	1,870
Finland	317	93	117	176	266
France	6,200	6,200	6,300	6,100	6,800
Germany (Tri-zone)	3,700	2,150	1,975	2,250	2,800
Greece	550	349	376	384	390
Hungary	1,050	---	650	750	---
Ireland	1,086	801	733	844	1,014
Italy	5,600	3,600	4,300	4,450	4,550
Luxembourg	40	---	30	35	40
Netherlands	1,978	480	1,052	1,159	1,480
Norway	369	155	198	263	330
Poland and Danzig	3,500	2,276	---	---	---
Portugal	250	---	---	---	---
Rumania	1,500	3/ 532	---	---	---
Spain	1,700	---	1,992	1,800	1,860
Sweden	900	1,149	1,217	1,335	1,555
Switzerland	423	391	442	520	559
United Kingdom-Farm 4/	5/ 3,871	2,418	2,600	3,000	3,500
Total	5/ 5,098	3,850	4,000	4,300	5,000
Yugoslavia	1,000	---	---	---	---
ASIA					
Lebanon	---	65	60	48	42
Palestine	108	200	---	---	---
Syria	92	120	90	110	120
Turkey	1,003	863	895	---	---
Japan	3,553	936	---	---	---
India	---	2,794	---	---	1,085
Pakistan	---	571	---	---	---
Philippine Islands	---	---	---	250	---
SOUTH AMERICA					
Argentina	1,127	---	---	---	---
Brazil	---	----	---	2,160	---
Chile	---	520	460	370	---
Paraguay	---	---	100	---	---
Uruguay	289	358	326	330	300
AFRICA					
Egypt	751	---	---	---	---
French Morocco	1,000	---	---	---	---
Union of South Africa	---	---	372	---	1,200
OCEANIA					
Australia 6/	708	1,358	1,470	1,431	1,443
New Zealand	430	---	---	---	450

1/ Relates to farm production in Canada and the United States, but data for many countries not explicit on this point. 2/ Postwar numbers possibly under-reported. 3/ 58 counties. 4/ Year ending May of year indicated. 5/ 3-year average. 6/ Commercial production for year beginning in July of year reported.

Office of Foreign Agricultural Relations.

Table 15.- Chickens: Numbers in specified countries, average 1934-38, annual 1946-50

Continent and country	Date applicable	Average 1935-38	1946	1947	1948	1949	1950
		Thousands	Thousands	Thousands	Thousands	Thousands	Thousands
NORTH AMERICA							
Canada	1/ Dec. 1	44,077	51,697	50,728	47,310	37,169	39,319
Guatemala		2/ 664	---	---	---	---	---
Mexico	March	3/ 36,368	---	---	---	---	---
Panama		2/ 195	1,372	1,528	---	---	---
United States	Jan. 1	408,177	530,203	474,441	461,550	448,676	481,198
Cuba	July	---	10,500	10,000	9,000	8,500	9,000
Dominican Republic		2,358	1,906	1,900	---	---	---
EUROPE							
Albania		2,060	1,800	---	---	---	---
Austria	1/ Dec. 3	2/ 8,862	5,300	5,400	5,800	5,600	6,100
Belgium	1/ Dec. 31	16,500	11,111	13,333	13,500	16,100	16,300
Bulgaria	1/ Dec. 31	4/ 11,814	---	---	---	---	---
Czechoslovakia 5/	Jan.	2/6/31,875	---	10,660	11,982	14,987	---
Denmark	July	2/ 27,643	18,388	19,271	23,445	28,000	---
Finland 7/	Sept. 1	2,853	1,171	---	---	---	---
France 8/	1/ Fall	145,000	---	145,500	---	---	---
Germany (Tri-zone)	1/ Dec.	51,225	---	27,500	25,500	29,000	35,000
Greece 9/	1/ Nov. 30	11,679	8,200	7,500	8,625	9,700	---
Hungary	Feb. 28	4/ 17,880	10/ 16,000	---	---	---	15,000
Ireland	June	15,961	15,263	14,537	17,079	18,524	---
Italy		76,000	---	11/ 50,613	---	---	---
Luxembourg	1/ Dec.	2/ 515	275	350	380	400	400
Netherlands 12/	1/ Dec.	13/ 29,632	3,078	7,315	---	9,843	10,584
Norway	June 20	5,686	2,926	3,768	4,663	5,500	---
Poland and Danzig	July	50,000	20,000	---	39,000	---	---
Portugal	1/ Dec. 31	14/ 5,716	---	---	---	---	---
Rumania		2/ 31,853	15/ 10,939	---	15,000	---	---
Spain	July 1	16/ 28,972	17/ 22,468	---	37,200	33,500	35,000
Sweden	June	10/ 10,980	---	12,395	13,991	15,000	15,100
Switzerland	14/Apr.	5,544	5,043	5,025	5,900	6,100	---
United Kingdom-Farm	June	73,402	61,723	64,880	79,219	88,706	---
Total	June	---	76,393	81,526	---	---	---
Yugoslavia	1/ Dec. 31	18,021	---	---	---	---	---
ASIA							
Lebanon	1/ Dec.	---	1,400	1,450	---	---	---
Palestine		2/ 1,914	---	---	---	---	---
Syria		1,525	2,029	1,826	2,235	---	---
Turkey		16,794	18,422	18,514	17,303	---	---
China		265,765	184,984	204,115	---	---	---
Japan	July	51,094	19,000	---	---	---	---
India		---	146,081	---	---	---	62,600
Pakistan		---	44,732	---	---	---	---
Philippine Islands		25,365	9,434	---	23,000	25,000	---
SOUTH AMERICA							
Argentina	June	18/ 42,988	---	---	---	---	---
Brazil		19/ 59,000	---	---	60,000	---	---
Chile	June	2/ 1,026	5,000	4,500	3,600	---	---
Paraguay		---	---	2,000	---	---	---
Uruguay		18/ 4,814	5,312	4,912	3,952	3,752	---
AFRICA							
Egypt	July	14/ 26,889	---	---	---	---	---
French Morocco		2/ 50,000	---	---	---	---	---
Union of South Africa	Aug.	18/ 14,000	14,000	16,000	15,834	---	---
OCEANIA							
Australia	1/ Dec. 31	15,541	15,000	---	---	---	---
New Zealand	March	14/ 3,489	---	---	---	---	4,200

1/ End of year estimates (October to December) included under the following year for comparison. Thus for Canada, the December 1, 1945 estimate of 51,697 is shown under 1946. 2/ Average for 2 to 4 years only. 3/ 1940. 4/ 1935. 5/ Postwar numbers possibly under-reported. 6/ May 1. 7/ Adult poultry. 8/ Represents chickens raised. 9/ All poultry. 10/ September. 11/ Hens and cocks. 12/ Hens and pullets. 13/ June. 14/ 1936. 15/ 58 counties instead of 71 as prewar. 16/ 1939. 17/ April. 18/ 1937. 19/ 1938.

Office of Foreign Agricultural Relations.

Egg production in the United States during 1949 increased 2 percent over 1948, due largely to a record yield of 165 eggs per hen, since the average number of layers was about the same. Favorable price-cost relations early in the year encouraged a large hatch, which by January 1, 1950, resulted in a 7 percent increase in chicken numbers on farms compared with a year earlier. Egg prices fell sharply in November and December and the Government support price for 1950 was announced at 37 cents (about 20 percent below 1949). Culling has been within the range of previous experience and production in 1950 continues high.

In 1949, Irish egg production was 20 percent above the previous year due largely to greater poultry numbers which are now above prewar. This increase permitted exports twice as large as those of 1948, all of which went to the United Kingdom. Egg prices to Irish producers have tended downward slightly during the year, but are not expected to depress output.

The Netherlands' egg production increased about 27 percent during 1949. The Government hopes to export larger quantities of eggs to the United Kingdom and Western Germany in 1950 and has announced that it will allow an increase of one-third in the size of hatch this year over 1949. High cost of imported feed is becoming more important to Dutch poultrymen as prices for eggs declined slightly during the year.

Egg production and chicken numbers in Denmark continue to increase substantially as the Danish export markets remain receptive to high-quality eggs. Exports, which are directed mainly to the United Kingdom and Western Germany, were twice as large in 1949 as in 1948, but were only about three-fourths of prewar. The large imports of grain necessary to the poultry industry are a major problem, and cut-backs in imports may be reflected in the poultry industry this year.

Agricultural authorities in Switzerland were fairly successful in the first year of their attempt to level out the seasonal production through seasonally regulated prices. The hatching period, which was permitted to run until June 15 last year, will be closed on May 31 in 1950 in an attempt to restrict the number of eggs hatched. The Swiss also are confronted with limited indigenous feed supplies and the necessity of importing feed from hard currency countries. Domestically produced eggs are meeting increasing competition from eggs imported from countries with devalued currencies.

Poultrymen in both Sweden and Finland are now directing more effort towards finding export markets, inasmuch as production is more than ample for their current high domestic consumption. Egg prices during 1949 in these two countries were down from 1948 and are expected to continue this trend, but each has a much improved feed supply which may somewhat offset lower prices.

Greatly increased supplies of eggs were available to consumers in the United Kingdom during 1949 with production and imports respectively 16 and 36 percent above 1948. Even though there has been a 50 percent

reduction in feed subsidies, further improvement in production is expected in 1950 because the British Government still guarantees high egg prices to farmers and increased feed supplies have been made available.

Egg production in Spain is reported above 1948 mainly because the incidence of Newcastle disease is thought to be less severe in 1949.

More chickens and ample feed made Belgium a net exporter in 1949 after being a net importer of 122 million eggs in 1948. Belgian exports went to Western Germany, Argentina and Uruguay. Argentina, normally an exporter of eggs and poultry, made only minor shipments of eggs late in the year. Production of eggs and poultry during 1949 was about the same as 1948, but increased domestic consumption utilized most of the output. A light corn crop and high feed prices in the regions of Argentina in which poultry is important are expected to curtail any increase in poultry during 1950.

Austria discontinued price control and rationing of eggs early in 1949. The easing of controls helped to stabilize the market at prices profitable to poultrymen.

Recovery in Greece has been delayed because of disease, feed scarcity and continued guerilla attacks. However, egg prices remain strong and considerable effort is being made to supply the local market.

Poultry numbers in India have dropped drastically since the previous report in 1946. Government officials attribute the decrease to the movement of Moslem poultry keepers from India to Pakistan.

Australian poultrymen, who currently have a contract with the United Kingdom for their exportable surplus of eggs, had considerable difficulties during 1949 because of high-cost feeds, short supply of by-product feeds, and restricted transportation during the hatching season because of the extended Australian rail strike. A smaller hatch, decreased production and reduced exports are expected in 1950. Currently, poultry meat prices are more favorable than prices paid for eggs.

The New Zealand poultry industry has continued to expand under controlled prices and improved feed supplies.

Record egg production has been reported in the Union of South Africa as prices held firm throughout most of the year. Poultrymen of that country had considerable misfortune in the latter part of the year with an outbreak of Newcastle disease and trouble with poor keeping quality of their exported eggs. Effort is being made to control these handicaps.

Production statistics concerning the Chinese egg and poultry industry are not available, but reports indicate that exports of egg products from Central China increased several fold in the latter part of 1949 as compared with a year earlier. This trend is expected to continue into 1950 as the cessation of fighting in that area has permitted the establishment of inland transportation and the construction of processing plants.

Table 16. - Eggs: Comparison of springtime average farm prices and highest monthly farm prices, 1925 to date

(Data for cover chart)

Year	Average springtime (March, April May) farm price per dozen	Highest monthly farm price per dozen	Month in which highest price occurred	Highest monthly price as a percentage of springtime price
	Cents	Cents	Month	Percent
1925	24.3	48.6	January	200
1926	24.7	47.6	December	193
1927	20.3	43.3	December	213
1928	23.5	42.9	December	183
1929	25.1	45.8	December	182
1930	20.9	38.4	January	184
1931	15.5	26.4	November	170
1932	10.3	28.1	December	273
1933	10.7	24.0	November	224
1934	13.7	28.6	November	209
1935	20.0	30.1	November	151
1936	17.5	32.5	November	186
1937	19.3	28.0	November	145
1938	16.6	29.0	November	175
1939	15.6	25.8	November	165
1940	15.2	26.8	December	176
1941	18.7	35.5	November	190
1942	26.0	39.7	December	153
1943	34.0	47.1	November	139
1944	28.1	44.5	December	158
1945	33.3	48.2	December	145
1946	32.1	51.5	October	160
1947	40.5	58.7	December	145
1948	42.2	58.3	November	138
1949	42.3	52.5	September	124

The process of sexing day-old chicks--examining them to determine whether they are pullets or cockerels--originated in Japan. Japanese seem to have a peculiar facility for doing this work, and many of the sexers now at work in the United States are of Japanese origin.

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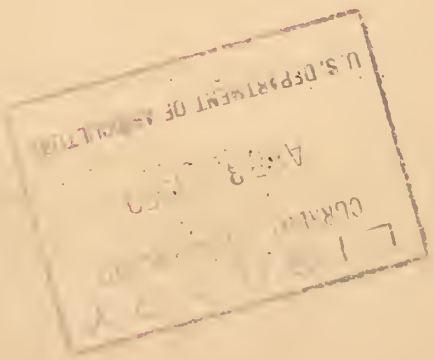
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